

Minutes, Public Works Committee, December 7, 2010.
Town Room, Town Hall

Present: Stephen Braun (chair), Don George, Christine Gray-Mullen, Guilford Mooring (Superintendent, DPW), Charlie Moran. Guest: Kevin Eddings

1. Administrative

Minutes of November 9: Approved 4-0-0

Next meetings set for January 4, 2011 (Big Y intersection public hearing that had been scheduled for this meeting postponed to Jan. 4 because of delays in project approvals from the State), and Feb. 1, 2011 (Spring Street and Wildwood Safe Schools hearings).

2. Project Updates: Guilford Mooring

Road work is finished for the season. Spring Street—putting in conduit for underground wires, but we don't have the money for putting the wires underground. Rte 116 repaving done; Atkins corner intersections—house may come down this winter; contract is well underway. Sand Hill done; ready for snow.

New Business: Kevin Eddings brought an undated memo to Superintendent Mooring from himself, Rob Crowner, Lynn Grabowski, and Rob Kusner headed "2011 supplemental transportation bond authorization request." The purpose of the request, as stated in the memorandum, is "to place Amherst on the road towards its transportation goal of complete streets." The proposal is that Amherst borrow \$1,196,000 to fund a nuanced, street-by-street program to bring Amherst's roadways closer to the ideal of the complete street---a street on which automobiles, bicycles, busses, and pedestrians can travel with safety and ease. Mr. Eddings asked that PWC support this request. Steve Braun said that we'd need to know more specifically how the funds realized from the borrowing would be used. He suggested that Mr. Eddings and the authors of the memorandum sit down with Superintendent Mooring and see what is already in the pipeline—e.g. the improvements planned with the CDBG proposal, and the Meadow Street project---and come up with a list of streets and their proposed modifications.

3. Old Business:

Charlie Moran reported on the research that he and Steve Braun have done on Massachusetts' towns' road condition and their spending on roads. They found some information, but none that would be useful in determining whether Amherst was spending more or less than comparable towns on their road maintenance programs.

The goal of this research was to begin to build an argument for a level of funding that would maintain Amherst's roads without the need for borrowing. Mr. Moran noted that it would be difficult in the short term to ask the Town to do more than it will be doing in servicing the bond issue, which will cost the town, with principal and interest payments, \$400,000-\$450,000/year for the next ten years.

The Committee then began to explore a range of strategies aimed at preserving more of Chapter 90 funds for road maintenance, and less on equipment and/or less on work mandated by the Clean Water Act to control non-point-source pollution. Ms. Gray-Mullen agreed to research the idea of creating a new enterprise fund for maintenance of the town's storm water drains and system, which might allow more Chapter 90 funds to be used for ongoing roadway maintenance. She will report back to the committee at a later date

The meeting adjourned at 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Moran, Sec'y pro tem.